Utah Folk Art

A Catalog of Material Culture

Edited by Hal Cannon

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Fig. 44
Mt. Carmel. Karl Haglund.
Photograph. 1978.
This town lies just east of
Zion National Park and
dramatically illustrates the
conflict between man and the
land in the harsh Great Basin.

Silhouetted against the rugged Great Basin landscape (Fig. 44), folk architecture in Utah is highly visible. The old adobe, stone, and brick homes of the Mormon pioneers have captured the attention of scholars and the general public alike with their stately affirmation of historical continuity.[2] As visible signs from the past, these old buildings are comforting yet at the same time aloof and mysterious; for such houses can potentially tell us much about early Utah history, but our inability to comprehend totally the architectural vocabulary remains frustrating. For a variety of reasons, old houses have proved to be elusive historical documents.

The precise intentions of a builder working in the 1860s are impossible for us to know directly. Builders' diaries and record books are uncovered only rarely. The people who could answer our questions concerning architectural motives are now gone and for the most part remain nameless in history. Deprived of the irretrievable initial context, the historian logically turns back to the buildings themselves for answers. Even here, standing before the real and touchable artifact, the analyst must cope with complicated methodological problems. The houses from the nineteenth century which can be found in Utah today, many severely altered, retain little of their original appearance and personality (Figs. 45 and 46). Utahns approach them and speak of their "architectural heritage," expecting vague recollections of pioneer forefathers to suffice for explanation and meaning. The term *heritage* implies something acquired from predecessors—architecture, in this case. The historian's task is to discover the nature of this inheritance.

Dismayed by the scarcity of primary sources, intimidated by the size of the state, and confounded by the complexity of the extant architectural record, students of Utah folk housing have consistently turned from the analysis of actual buildings to seek answers elsewhere. Often the labels popularly attached to historic houses have served as the basis for scholarly interpretation. In Utah, houses from the 1849-80 period are typically "Mormon" or "pioneer" houses and are identified with the folk (or vernacular) phase of architectural development. "Pioneer" suggests sacrifice and hardship, "folk" connotes the plain and unsophisticated, and the fact that Utah folk housing is overwhelmingly Mormon furnishes the emerging image with the saintly qualities of purpose and order. From this perspective, old houses are practical adaptations to the frontier environment, they are preeminently primitive and simple in their design (waiting for high-style fashion to rescue them from their humble existence), and ultimately they are the solid and humorless manifestations of Mormon kingdom-building in the Great Basin.[3] Accordingly, the unknown has been rendered understandable through an informal partnership with concepts that are locally well known.

Fig. 45
John Lowry house. Manti.
G. E. Anderson. Photograph.
1888.

Fig. 46
John Lowry house. Manti.
Thomas R. Carter.
Photograph. 1979.
The obvious differences between this photograph and G. E. Anderson's 1888 photograph (Fig. 45) point to the problems scholars face in developing a clear image of historic architecture.

Such an interpretation of folk architecture, while convenient, remains problematic, for it is necessarily built on stereotypes of both folk culture and Mormon society and deals only marginally with the buildings themselves. Houses become what they *should be,* rather than what they actually *are.* If the study of folk housing is to be used effectively to tell us something about nineteenth-century Utah and thus transcend a nostalgic antiquarianism, thorough description must replace broad generalization. This collection of articles on Utah folk art can provide a forum in which to begin a new and systematic study of Utah folk housing. While this essay cannot be exhaustive and is itself a generalization, it can highlight several of the key aesthetic principles operative within the folk building tradition. Questioning the design assumptions which account for the house's appearance can illuminate meaningful clues in the architectural and historical puzzle.

Folk, Architecture, and Art

Folk objects have consistently been denied aesthetic merit. In a 1952 study of Utah architecture, David Winburn voiced a widely held opinion that the early Mormon homes were "in most cases so simple and unostentatious that it may be, in speaking of most of them, 'architecture' is too dignified a term to employ, since the term implies a conscious attempt toward artistic expression."[4] The recognition of a particular folk aesthetic is impeded by the feeling—deeply rooted in our western consciousness—that art is isolated in the progressive and elite segments of society. We are unaccustomed to the idea that the university-trained architect and the folk builder grapple with similar design problems. Their solutions may be different-one striving for innovation, the other inherently conservative-but both are united by the common desire to produce an attractive finished product. No builder consciously rejects the right to artistic expression. All arrifacts-and this includes pioneer dwellings-are shaped with an eye for the aesthetic.[5]

If folk buildings today appear starkly utilitarian, they are nevertheless discourteously relegated to a rigid craft category. Eulogies to good craftsmanship, however well intended, inherently circle back to exaltation of the pragmatic at the expense of the artistic. In such a scheme, craftsmen become insensitive machines that blindly crank out useful objects with no thought to outward appearance. In one study of a Mormon village, Cindy Rice points to this seeming incompatibility between folk and style: "The Mormon style house, with its austere lines, symmetry, and primarily brick or rock construction imparts a feeling of permanence and purpose but not frivolity."[6]

While durability is admittedly an important factor influencing any builder, this preoccupation with the practical implies that folk objects can have no beauty save in economy. A house, however, is more than any scholar's set of "juxtaposed rectangles"[7] and in life is imbued with a variety of specific functions.[8] The roof keeps out the rain and the windows let in light, but in addition the total house is visually pleasing to the builder and others in the community. Most contemporary examples of architecture are considered successful if they demonstrate singularity (or effectively emulate popular elements of an original idea). The folk builder, on the other hand, achieves his goal if his design resembles the familiar. The building of a house is an important event: Time and money are expended on a structure which confers status upon its occupant. Decisions affecting house design cannot be frivolous in a careless and haphazard sense; design decisions can, however, be playful and sensitive to particular ideas about beauty. The realization that both progressive and conservative designs are expressive gestures makes possible a meaningful synthesis of the concepts of folk, architecture, and art.

A folk house can be studied as art because it is the material articulation of a specific designing process. By concentrating on the more inclusive concept of design, the exclusive and prescriptively "elitist" meanings of the word *art* can be avoided. Kenneth Ames has recently suggested "that it is time to admit that art is not an eternal truth but a time-linked and locally variable concept, its definition being altered in response to complex patterns of social interaction."[9] In shifting away from the study of art to the study of the "designed world," the realm of aesthetic experience is opened up to all people. The mansion on Salt Lake City's South Temple street and the stone house in Willard both comply with the visual requirements of their respective audiences. Neither design is better than the other, nor is one considered "art" and the other something less. A house is not folk because of the way it looks but because its basic plan is traditional within the culture that produced it. *Folk* describes the process of building and not the absence of style.[10]

The likes, dislikes, and persistent needs of Utah's pioneer builders are thus expressed to some extent in the controlling decisions which shaped their houses. Design preferences can be discerned in three main areas: construction, decoration, and composition. By describing such complex and interrelated patterns, the folklorist can aid the historian in the attempt to breathe life back into the material landscape.

Building Zion: The Techniques of Settlement, Driven from Illinois into the desert wilderness of Utah, the Mormon pioneers were well aware of the biblical overtones of

their exodus. Church leaders quickly appropriated theJudeo-Christian concept of wilderness as a Symbolic device. The formidable Great Basin offered the Mormon people sanctuary from a persecuting society and became the place where the faithful would be tested." These Latter-day Saints quite naturally felt no special concern for the preservation of wilderness. As the kingdom of God was erected in the mountains, the desert would give way to earthly paradise. The inherent conflict between the opposing ideas of wilderness and garden created a dichotomy readily exploited in Church rhetoric.

The individual pioneers, however, saw such a conflict dramatically before them: The rugged mountains, endless skies, and semiarid valleys must have struck these dislodged Easterners as awesome indeed. From that first day in 1847 when the creeks of Salt Lake Valley were diverted for irrigation water, the struggle against the wilderness was joined. The village townscape (Pig. 47) which became ubiquitous in Utah, with its geometrically defined streets and overstated visual order, comforted the settlers by effectively drawing a boundary between man and nature.[12] Domestication was the watchword. The Church's President, Brigham Young, instructed his followers not to ravage and despoil the land, but rather to subdue it and make it beautiful:

There is a great work for the Saints to do; progress and improve upon and make beautiful everything around you. Cultivate the earth and cultivate your minds. Build cities, adorn your habitations, make gardens, orchards and vineyards, and render the earth so pleasant that when you look upon your labors you may do so with pleasure, and that angels may delight to come and visit your beautiful locations.[13]

The Edenic garden envisioned by the Utah Mormons would become the blueprint for the world of the future. Following the Parousia, the Millennium would be ushered in according to the plan which the Saints had established in Utah. In their efforts to realize the prophecy, the kingdom builders of the Great Basin sent nature reeling before them. The rejection of nature forms the first tenet of the folk architectural aesthetic.

The conflict between garden and wilderness is not peculiar to Utah or to any particular religious group; this simple opposition is a persistent theme echoing throughout American history. Early colonists reached the shores of this continent confident that a true paradise awaited their arrival. The seventeenth century viewed America as a land of "fabulous riches, a temperate climate, longevity, and garden-like natural beauty."[14] Greeted by the harshness of a "howling wilderness," these newcomers struggled valiantly to transform wild reality back into Edenic dream. Untamed land

threatened man on two levels: First, the untouched forest darkness harbored ferocious beasts, savage men, and demons of the imagination; second, and on a deeper level, wilderness was believed to be an area where civil and moral laws became inoperative and behavioral restraints broke down. Wilderness was an affront to the sensibilities of man.

The story of the domestication of our continent is well known; the forest was cleared, crops planted, and the land transformed into an arrangement of farms, roads, and cities. The "pioneer tradition" which conquered the land had little sympathy for nature. The French historian, Alexis de Tocqueville, visited America in 1831 and rightly observed that "living in the wilds, [the pioneer] only prizes the works of man."[15] Plow and axe would effectively control the natural world. "When Brigham Young spoke of "beautiful houses," his concept of beauty was consistent with that of his fellow frontier travelers: He was looking for a beauty based on arrificiality. The folk design aesthetic is built around the square, not the circle; it favors the smooth over the roughness of texture and glorifies the balanced over the irregular. The organic is stifled by the synthetic. In building up Zion, the Utah Mormons followed a well-worked-out American tradition of "turning nature into culture."[16]

The Mormon landscape is self-consciously controlled and fundamentally synthetic. While the settlers were forced by necessity in the first years to hovel in dugouts, the experience only intensified their antipathy to nature. If compelled to utilize native materials like adobe, stone, and logs in building permanent structures, their technology allowed them to mold these materials into the geometry of civilization. The various construction techniques employed in Utah demonstrate the settlers' willingness to devote considerable time and expense to differentiate the human from the natural landscape.[17]

Logs for dwellings were usually sawed or hewn square and were thus deprived of their identity as round trees. Often the logs were further disguised by the application of lumber siding or plaster (Fig. 50).

The organic irregularities of stone were chiseled into a smooth regularity of pattern pleasing to the settler's eye. The process of quarrying the stone, hauling it to the building site, shaping it into blocks, and placing the mortar in evenly coursed lines transcends pioneer expediency (Fig. 49A-C).

Clay was extracted from the ground, mixed with sand, and molded into the adobe bricks which became the most commonly used of all Mormon building materials. To help protect sun-dried " 'dobies" from the weather, walls were often plastered to present a smooth exterior finish. Plastering helped to preserve the fragile bricks, but it

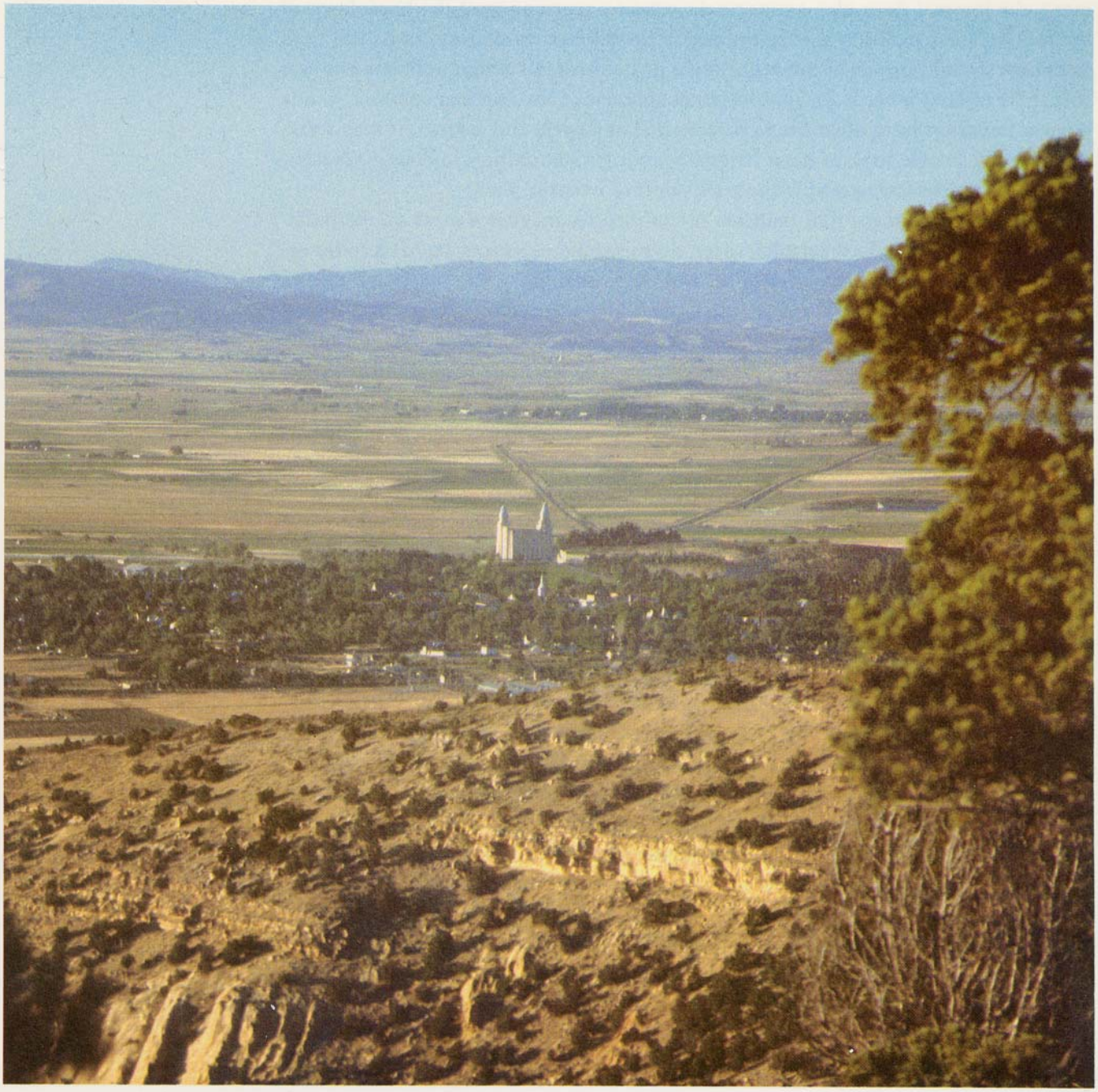
also made the house more attractive. In many parts of the state a "bricking" technique was used: the outer layer of plaster was colored with red brick dye and then scored to create an adobe facsimile of a kiln-fired brick home (Fig. 48).[18] "Fake stone" houses were also created by ingenious builders in a similar manner.

In shaping the house exterior, the Utah builder makes his meaning clear: Gold camps and railroad towns might come and go, but the Mormon communities would stay as permanent fixtures on the land. The West might indeed be wild and woolly, but the civilized world reigned in Utah. The house goes beyond practicality of shelter in affirming that Mormonism is a "correct, wholesome, and successful way of life."[19] As the folklorist Austin Fife reminds us, "their [the houses'] every line bespeaks the will to survive with dignity and the rationale of a well ordered household in a well ordered world."[20]

Decoration: Fashion on the Frontier. Driven by the desire for permanence and decency in a hostile environment, the early Utah settlers moved quickly away from the "dug-out" level of subsistence. Throughout the state in the 1850s and 1860s homes began to appear which displayed an ever-increasing concern for the comforts and fashions left behind in the East. Brigham Young's first Salt Lake City residence and later the building called the Lion House (1857-58) both exhibited features of architectural design well above the minimal requirements of shelter.[21] The Saints, following Brigham's concern for beauty, demonstrated a remarkable capability for building substantial dwellings and for keeping their designs abreast of current architectural ideas. While the folk-building tradition remained strong, popular architectural fashions were translated by builders into decorative features on the exterior of the house.

Mormon society has never known the stark, self-imposed asceticism of some American religious sects. The doctrine of continued revelation has allowed the Latter-day Saints to accept theological and cultural changes in a progressive manner.[22] Popular architectural fashions were greeted enthusiastically in Utah. While traditional house plans like the temple form, double-pen, hall and parlor, and central-hall types (see Figs. 51A-D) dominated much of nineteenth-century Utah building,[23] these basic house plans showed a vigorous flexibility in accommodating the fashionable whims of their owners. The architectural historian Peter Goss has identified five major styles surfacing in Utah during the 1847-90 period: Federal, Greek Revival, Gothic Revival, Second Empire, and the various styles associated with the Victorian period.[24] Of these styles, the first three had the greatest impact on the folk builder's design and appear primarily as decoration applied to the house facade. Despite such external embellish-

Fig. 47
Manti at sunset. Manti. The nucleated village settlement pattern successfully insulated human activity from the surrounding •wilds.



ment, the internal floor plan arrangement remains constant until the breakdown of the folk building tradition toward the end of the nineteenth century. In its ability to assimilate stylistic aspects of the major shifts in architectural design, folk housing was able to meet Utah's needs for both external appearance and internal comfort. While pioneer buildings have often been characterized as austere and spartan, it seems that the Mormon people took to heart Brigham Young's admonition to "build beautiful houses"[25] and whenever possible chose the adorned over the plain.

Decoration within the folk tradition is confined to designated areas on the building's outward fabric. On the gables, eaves, dormers, and entrances, builders could experiment with the frivolities of fashion without jeopardizing the successful appearance of the house. Folk housing in the United States generally adheres to a formal arrangement and symmetrical composition traceable to the dramatic influence of the Georgian architectural style on Colonial America.[26] Directed by the Georgian preference for visual order and rhythmical balance, Utah folk builders, like their counterparts in other sections of the country, manipulated decorative elements in such a way as to make them compatible with the discipline exerted by these governing stylistic principles.

As new architectural fashions emerged from the architect's sketchbook, they were quickly inspected for decorative features appropriate to the folk repertoire. The Federal style lent a shallow, low-pitched roof to the builder's book, but it changed the shape of the house only slightly. The colossal columns and pedimented gables of the Greek Revival were rejected at the folk level, but a scaled-down version of the Greek Temple Form house became a part of the Mormon New England tradition and can be found in Utah.[27] Folk builders regularly used Greek Revival-inspired entablature, pediment-shaped window heads, and plain cornice returns on traditional house types (Fig. 52). The visual complexity associated with the picturesque Gothic Revival style was translated by folk carpenters into a simple center facade gable, symmetrically incorporated into the older house plan.[28] Spired finials and intricately cut bargeboards were other Gothic Revival ornaments popularly incorporated into the Utah folk style (Fig. 52A). Later nineteenth-century styles, often lumped together rather casually under the term *Victorian,* are rarely found in the folk repertoire, though some Victorian details like gable shingling show up in later folk designs (Fig. 52B).

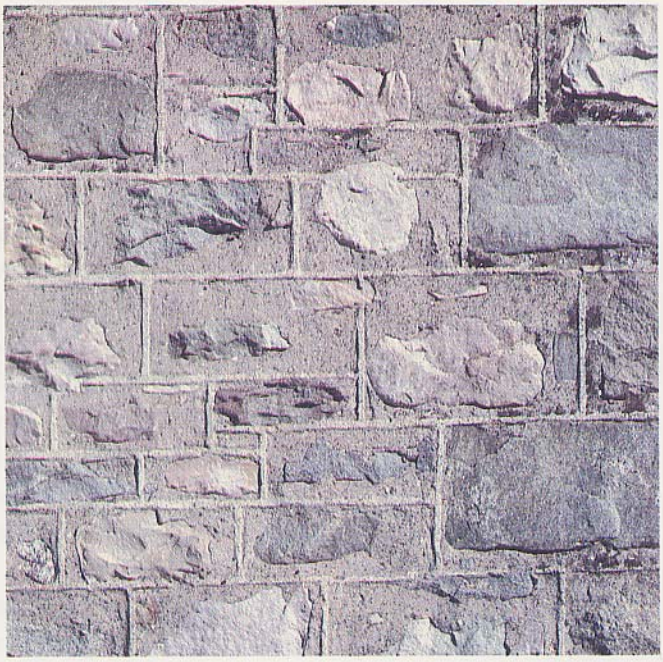
Most of the ideas for decorative work were disseminated in the countryside through popularly oriented house "pattern books." Such books, really builders' manuals, contained house plans, decorative ideas, and landscaping suggestions. If the builder was attracted by a particular geegaw or filigree in these catalogs, it was or-

dered from a local mill specializing in such decorations. Folk architecture does not exist in a cultural vacuum; people in early Utah were exposed to progressive movements in architecture through a wide variety of books and newspapers, not to mention firsthand accounts of travelers to Salt Lake City and the East.[29] Yet the willingness to accept the new was tempered by its reconciliation with the old.[30] Innovation was tolerated, but only to an extent that left the line of tradition unbroken.

The folk buildings encountered in Utah which have some, but not all, of the characteristics of certain recognized architectural styles should not be seen as incomplete and naive renderings of the high-style designs, but rather as the complicated culmination of a vigorous dialogue between the old and the new, the conservative and the innovative.[31] Decoration plays an important role in Utah folk architecture as underscored by the multifaceted visual treatment of dormers (Figs. 55A-F). How a house is decorated is one part of a complex system of house composition. The folk house is not a simple repetition of an old form-it is a consciously designed entity composed from a design inventory file in the builder's memory.

House Design: Complex Event. Beginning from a base concept-the floor plan-the house rises to completion as a series of decisions that the builder makes about size, height, roof orientation, window placement, and decoration." The choices are reached by the builder through the application of a series of designing rules-rules which gain authority by their compatibility with the prevailing traditional aesthetic.[35] Confronted with unlimited possibilities for what the house might look like, designing rules are intended to narrow the field of choice to insure that the house, when finished, will look "right." The rules allow the builder freedom but at the same time place a ceiling on the number of potential selections. For example, assume that a builder in St. George was contemplating a new house. After choosing the basic floor plan, his next step would be to decide the orientation of the roof. Within the Utah tradition the ridge of the roof may be placed either parallel or perpendicular to the public space (usually the street), but never at an angle. The St. George carpenter chooses a parallel ridgeline type and then proceeds to questions about the height of his new dwelling. The folk repertoire contains rules for one-, one-and-a-half-, two-, and two-and-a-half-story buildings. Depending upon his pocketbook, the builder makes a choice. Similar processes determine the placement of chimneys, the arrangement of the front door and window, and the application of decorative elements.

Obviously there is no set order for the consideration of the designing rules, but all are brought into action before the house is completed. The rules bring order to chaos



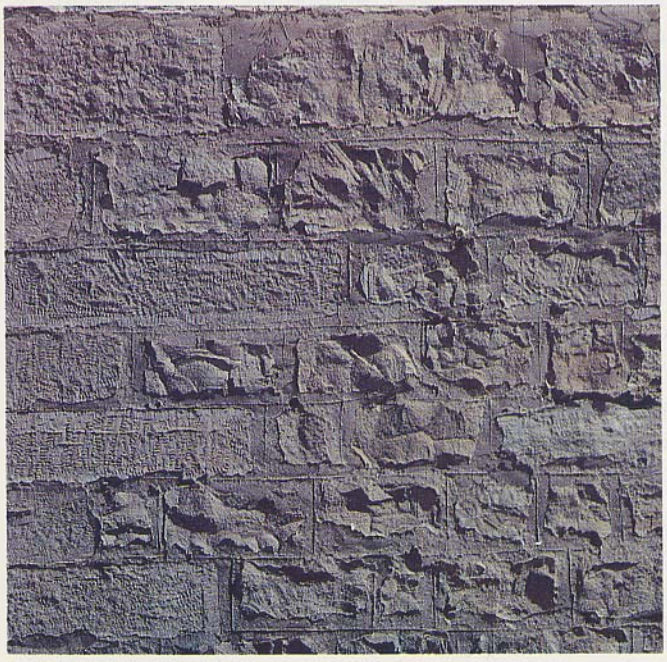


Fig. 48 (upper left, facing page)
"Bricking" over adobe. Spring City.
The technique of applying colored plaster over adobe was common in all parts of Utah where sun-dried brick was utilized. The smooth plaster was scored to simulate brick and stone.

Fig. 49
House exteriors.
Early settlers in Utah utilized a variety of stone in house building. The preference for geometric regularity guided the masons' hands.
(A: upper right, facing page)
Coursed granite masonry, Willard.
(B: lower left, facing page)
Raised coursing over regular limestone, Manti.
(C: lower right, facing page)
Raised joints over irregular volcanic stone, Beaver (Thomas Frazer's decorative "Scottish" masonry.)

Fig. 50
Log House with plaster covering. Spring City.
The willow lathe suggests that the plaster is an early and integral part of the house design.

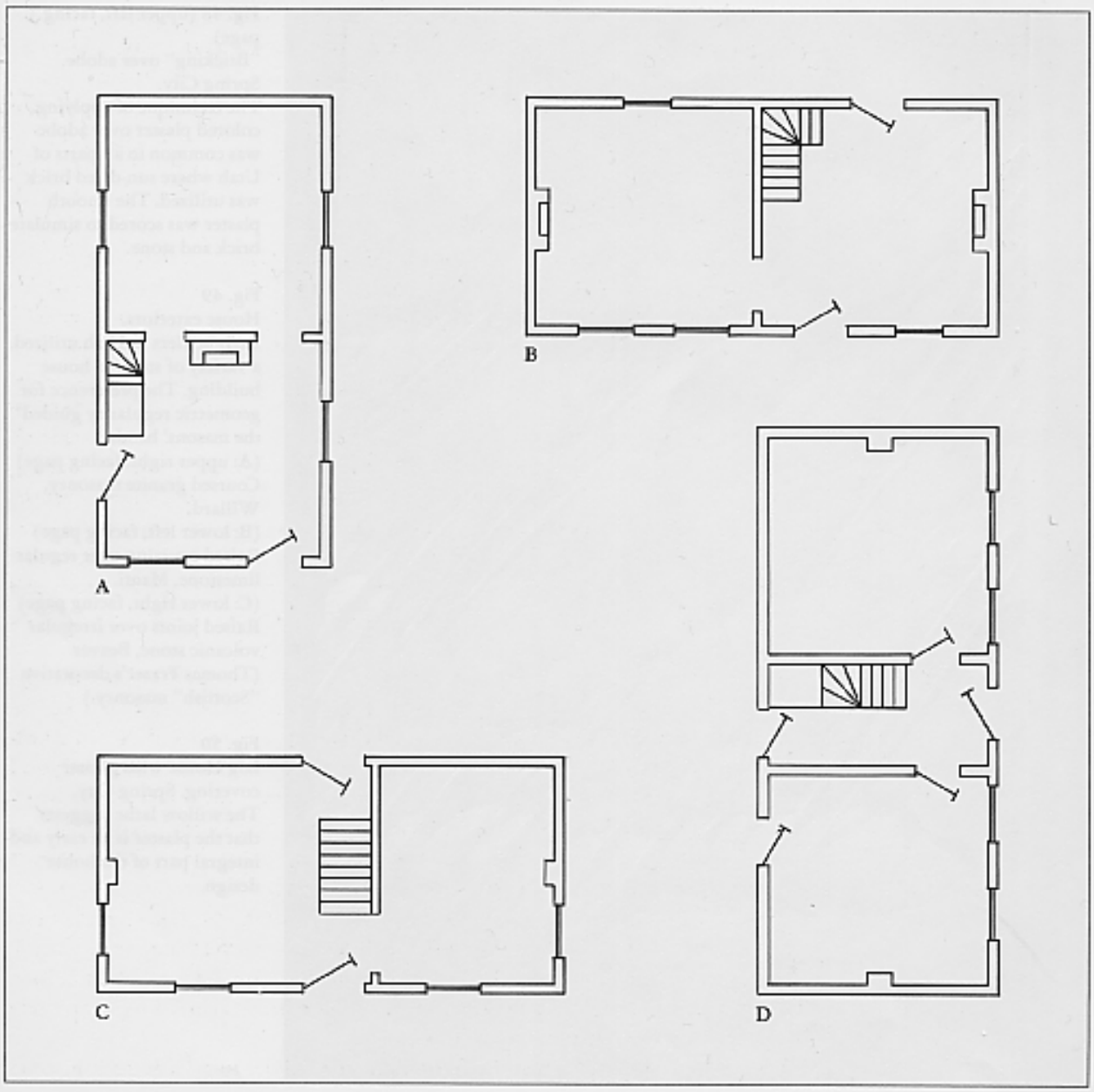

A
B
C
D

Fig. 51
Floor plans found extensively in Utah.
(A) Temple form.
(B) **Double pen.**
(C) Hall and parlor.
(D) Central hall.

and make the builder's task practicable. How many choices the builder will have within a given rule set is determined by the restrictions the culture places upon acceptable variation. In some areas of the United States folk builders labored under a severely limited rule set;[34] in Utah, however, the compositional options within the tradition appear remarkably open and probably reflect the secure nature of the Latter-day Saint religious communities and the heterogeneous convert population. The rules pertaining to the fenestration of the facade are particularly illustrative of the latitude available within the Utah folk building style.

On the whole, folk housing in Utah reflects the regular symmetry wrought upon folk building in the United States by the impact of the Georgian form.[35] The preference of external design gravitates toward a bilaterally symmetrical, tripartite model.[36] An object is bilaterally symmetrical if it can be divided visually into two identical parts. Inserting a third element between these two halves leads to a construction that is tripartite (containing three distinct components) and yet is still bilaterally symmetrical (dividing the object down the middle continues to yield two identical halves). The house facade in Figure 54 is an example of bilateral, tripartite symmetry. Piercing the facade of the house-that is, making openings for the doors and windows-usually follows the controlling guidelines of symmetrical balance. Upstairs windows (and occasionally doors) are located directly over the lower openings to achieve a facade that is in perfect equilibrium. Utah folk houses generally reflect this desire for order, and the placement of second-story openings over first-floor openings would probably be the first and most obvious choice for piercing the house facade.

Within the Utah tradition, however, other rules exist which deviate from this rigidly balanced pattern. Figure 54 represents a fairly typical "hall-and-parlor" (see Fig. 51C) house plan in Utah. Figures 55A-D indicate transformations of the basic hall-and-parlor floor plan in one small Utah town and reveal the extent of compositional freedom within the tradition. Spring City builders achieved visual complexity by effectively playing off the upper against the lower openings. Figures 55A and 55C are unusual and intriguing variations on the ideas of bilateral symmetry and dispense with the tripartite model completely. Figure 5 5D brings a house back into perfect harmony. Though symmetry breaks down completely in 55B, the house remains successful because of the tolerance within the tradition. The mismatching of the facade openings cannot be attributed to naivete or incompetence on the builder's part. Such diversity shows that the rules for facade piercing have been extended to compensate for a deeper confusion within the tradition itself.

Two or four openings across the front allow the builder to achieve both internal

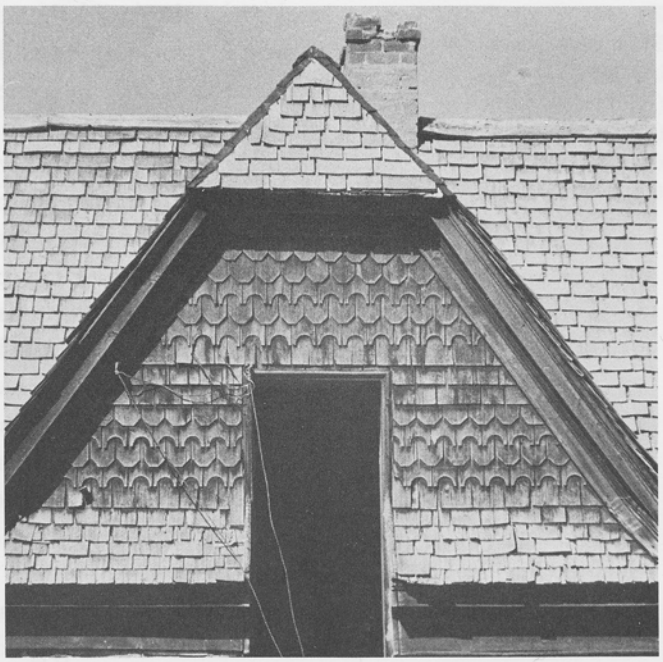


Fig. 52
Gables.
(A: upper left) Gothic Revival, Midway (Bargeboard scroll cut by Moroni Blood).
(B: upper right) Later nineteenth-century "Victorian" shingling, Central.
(C) Greek Revival, Mt. Pleasant.

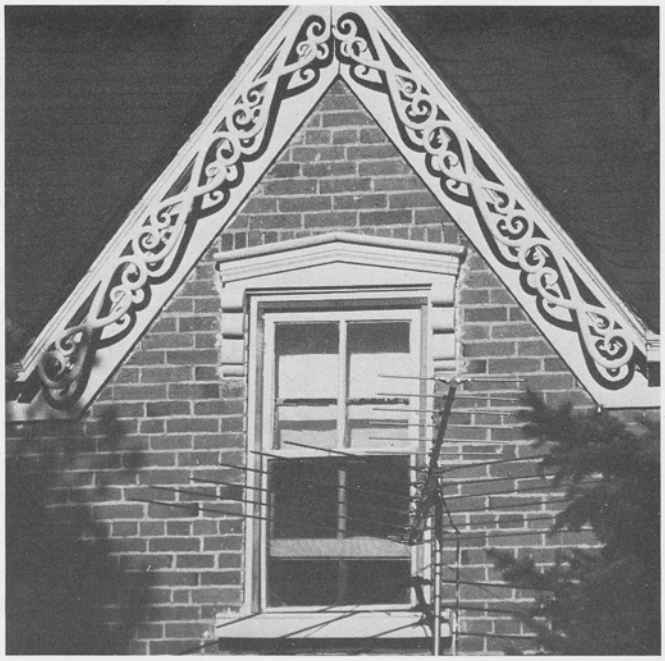
and external symmetry; the facade is rhythmically balanced and the rooms of the house are equal in size (see the double-pen plan in Fig. 51B).[37] Three- and five-opening facades on hall-and-parlor floor plans (Fig. 51C) adhere most closely to the tripartite ideal yet sacrifice the symmetrical division of internal space for outward appearance. The houses pictured in Figures 55A and 55C reflect a conflict in the builder's mind between external and internal priorities. Each of these houses has a hall-and-parlor first-floor plan and a double-pen second-level room arrangement-hence the odd-number opening pattern downstairs and the even number on top. The lack of control on the facade suggests that the conflict between inside and outside concerns was never fully resolved and that a compromise solution was never totally effected. The insertion of a central hall between two equal-sized rooms (Fig. 5lD) is one common answer to the question of internal-external symmetry. Yet Utah's experience with the central-hall house has been overstated; [38] many builders chose instead to work out spatial problems on the facade of the hall-and-parlor house type.

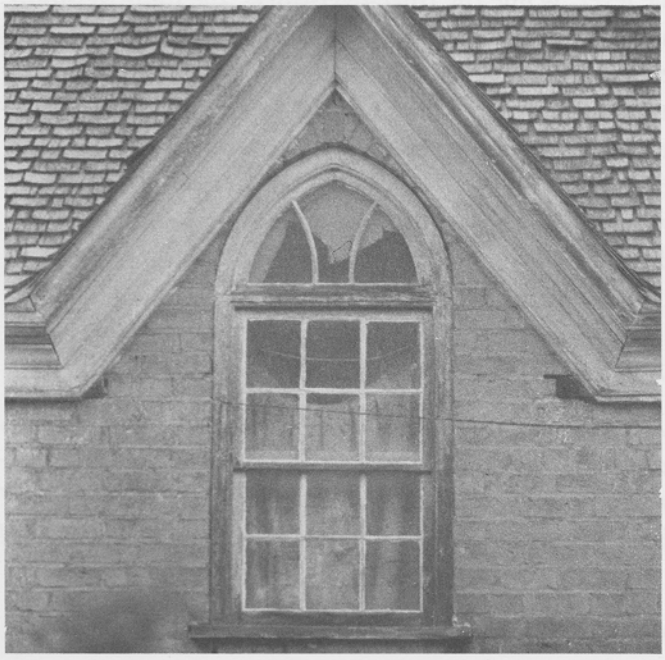
The selection of one particular house type with one predictable facade pattern would point to the consolidation of design principles and the contraction of the rule set. In Utah, despite the theocratic organization of the society, such a selection and contraction did not occur. Figures 56A-E effectively demonstrate the openness of the design tradition on a statewide level. While the three-over-three-, the four-over-four-, and the five-over-five-opening houses are the most commonly encountered types in Utah, the attention given here to the unusual houses has not been to highlight the exotic but rather to illustrate the flexibility of the tradition to accommodate a wide range of facade designs. The rules could be stretched to cover even the visual disharmony of houses such as that illustrated in Figure 55B. Utah folk builders manipulated the ideas of order and symmetry up to and beyond the breaking point.

Most writers have ignored this diversity in Mormon folk architecture in their desire to find the closed system felt intrinsic to the orderly, authoritarian world ofZion. Yet architectural eclecticism was a reality in early Utah,[39] as John Taylor, Brigham Young's successor to the Church Presidency, told a group of Saints in Malad, Idaho:

You have a beautiful location, and I would like to see you make the most of it. I would like to see at least a hundred times more apple, pear, and cherry trees planted out; and all of your streets lined with shade trees. And improve your dwelling houses. If you cannot find the style of a house to suit you, go off to other places until you do find one, and then come back and build a better one.[40]

The Mormons were hard pressed in their exile, but architecture comforted them.





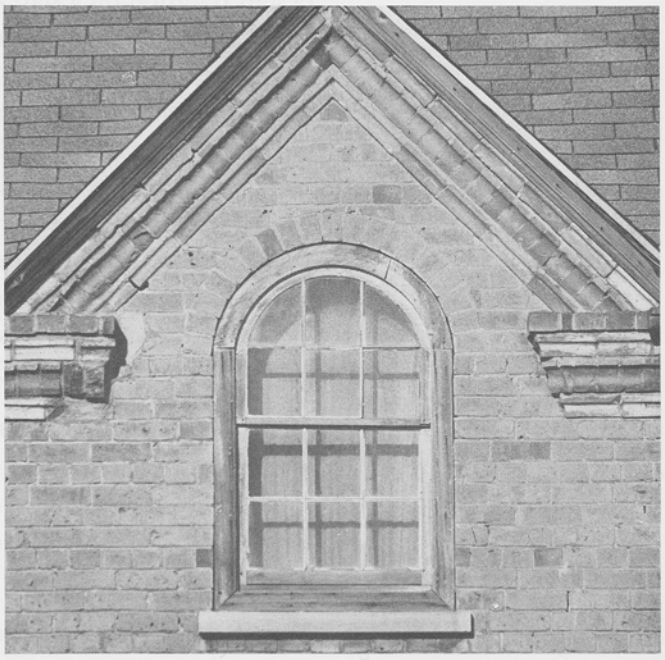


Fig. 53
Dormers.
Dormer windows proved extremely popular throughout Utah and provided individual owners with an excellent opportunity for decorative display.
(A: upper left, facing page)
Gothic Revival, Willard.
(B: upper right, facing page)
Gothic Revival, Panguitch.
(C: lower left, facing page)
Eclectic, Fountain Green
(D: lower right, facing page)
Gothic Revival, Scipio.
(E: upper left)
Eclectic, St. George
(F: lower left)
Round, Ephraim.

Fig. 54
John Platts house. Salt Lake City.
Cobblestone and brick hall-and-parlor plan showing the bilaterally symmetrical, tripartite design favored by American folk architects of the nineteenth century.

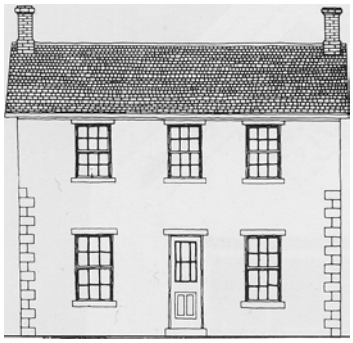
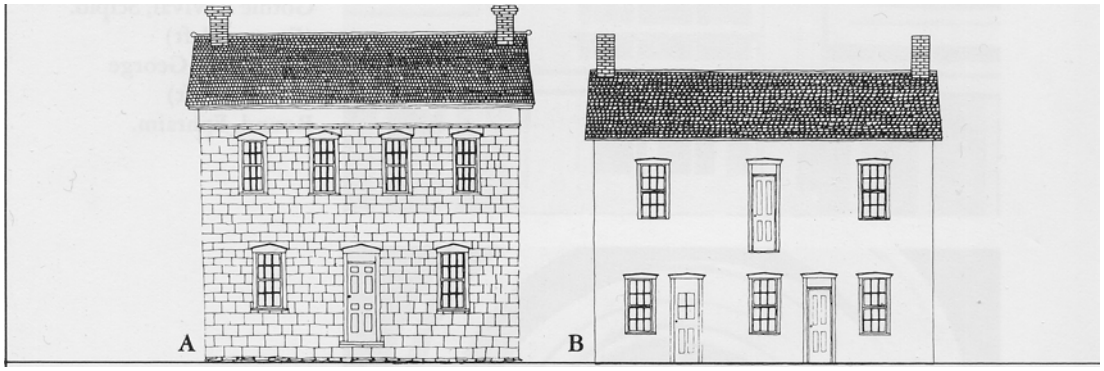
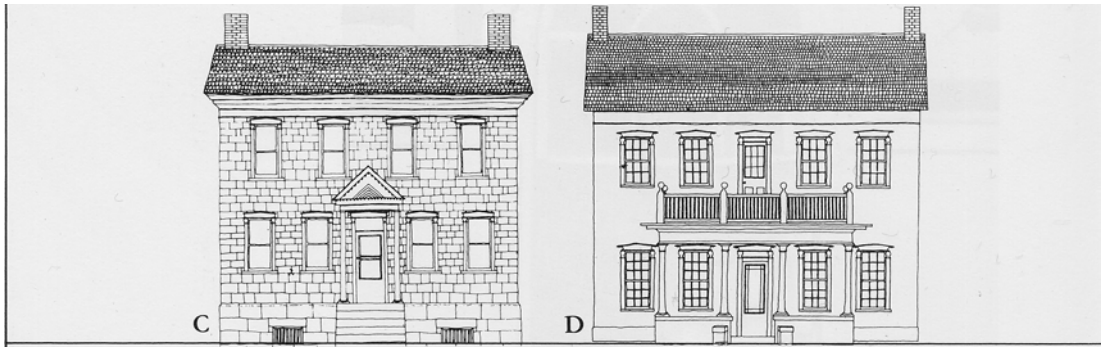


Fig. 55
Facade fenestration.
All examples are from Spring City.
(A) Charles Crawforth house (stone hall-and-parlor plan).
(B) Niels Borreson house (plaster over stone hall-and-parlor plan).
(C) Orson Hyde house (stone hall-and-parlor plan).
(D) Crisp-Allred house (plaster over stone hall-and-parlor plan).





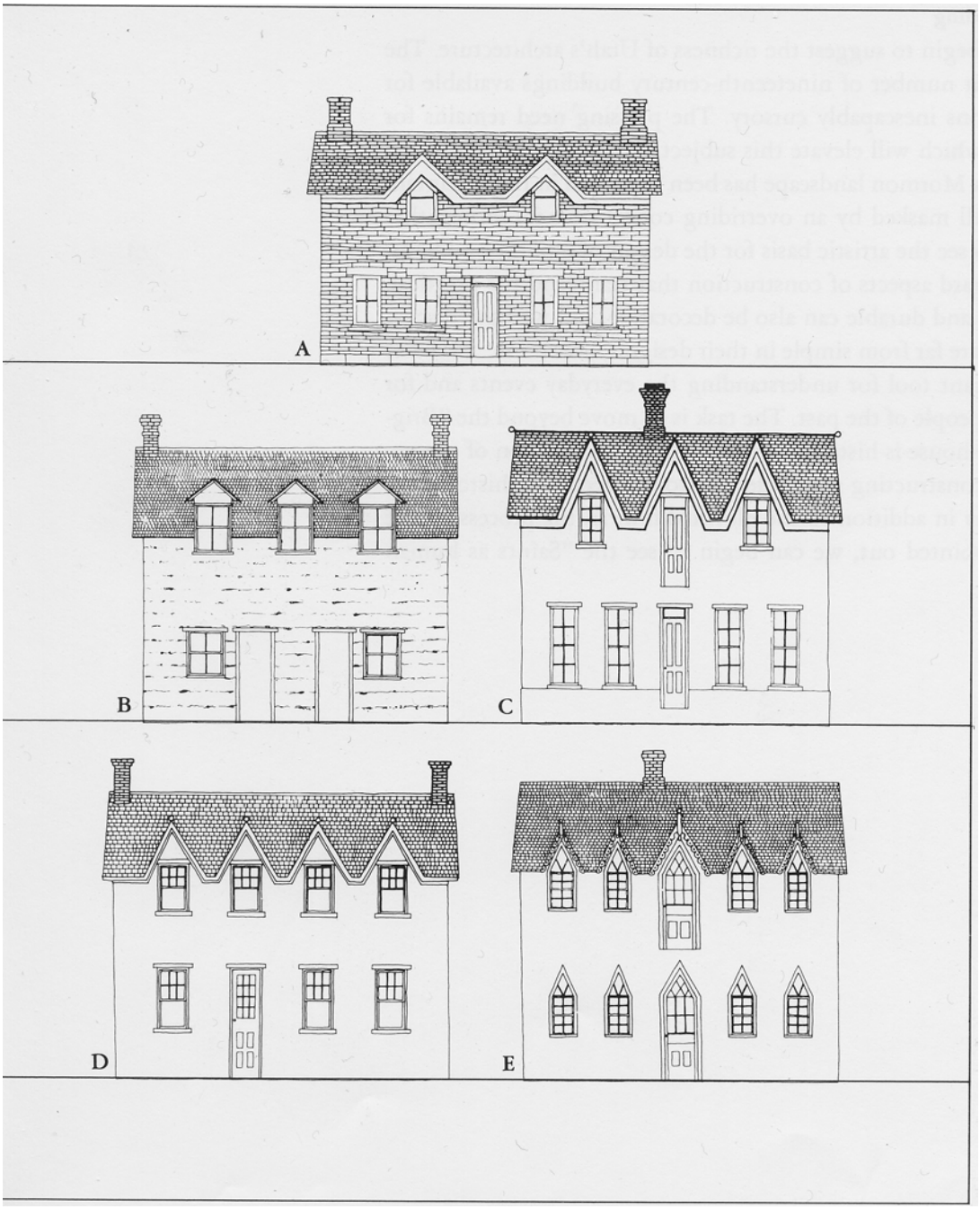


Fig. 56
Dormers.
These houses illustrate the range of acceptable deviation from the symmetrical model in the placement of the upper-story wall dormers.
(A) Stone hall-and-parlor house, Fairview.
(B) Mud concrete double-pen house, Paragonah.
(C) Brick hall-and-parlor house, Panguitch.
(D) Brick double-pen house, Manti.
(E) Plaster over adobe hall-and-parlor house, Fillmore.

A New Architectural Understanding

This short paper can only begin to suggest the richness of Utah's architecture. The size of the state and the great number of nineteenth-century buildings available for study makes these observations inescapably cursory. The pressing need remains for detailed community studies which will elevate this subject, overly simplified to date, back to its true complexity. A Mormon landscape has been discerned in the Mountain West,41 but its identity is still masked by an overriding concern for its form rather than its content. By trying to see the artistic basis for the design of pioneer buildings, we have shifted our gaze toward aspects of construction that transcend the practical, we have found that the solid and durable can also be decorative, and we have discovered that these old buildings are far from simple in their design.

Folk houses are an important tool for understanding the everyday events and for getting to know the average people of the past. The task is to move beyond the "Brigham-Young-slept-here-so-the-house-is-historic" stage to the full realization of the potential of all old houses for constructing a complete historical record-a history that includes the unheralded many in addition to the glorified few. In the process, as the historian Davis Bitton has pointed out, we can begin to see the "Saints as human beings."42

Notes

1. The obvious debt here is to the teaching and published works of Henry Glassie. Classic's intriguing model for folk-housing analysis has provided an excellent framework for revising our perception of the Mormon architectural landscape. My thanks also to Peter Goss and Jan Shipps for valuable comments concerning the content of this essay.
2. A listing of works dealing with the material folk culture of Utah can be found in William A. Wilson's "A Bibliography of Studies in Mormon Folklore," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 44, no. 4 (Fall 1976):393-94.
3. One folklorist has written that Mormon houses "embody the same virtues of solidity, simplicity, and practicality that characterized the Saints themselves." See Jan Harold Brunvand, "The Architecture ofZion," *The American West* 13, no. 2 (March-April 1976) :29.
4. David Winburn, "The Early Houses of Utah: A Study of Techniques and Materials" (Master's thesis. University of Utah, 1952), pp. 1-2.
5. See Henry Glassie, "Artifacts: Folk, Popular, Imaginary, and Real," in *Icons of Popular Culture,* ed. Marshall Pishwick and Ray B. Browne (Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green University Popular Press, 1970), pp. 110-11; and John A.Kouwenhoven, *The Arts in Modem American Civilization* (1948; reprint ed.. New York: W. W. Norton, 1967), p. 3.
6. Cindy Rice, "Spring City: A Look at a Nineteenth Century Mormon Village," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (Summer 1975) :271.
7. Leon S. Pitman, "A Survey of Nineteenth Century Folk Housing in the Mormon Culture Region" (Ph.D. dissertation, Louisiana State University, 1973), p. 191.
8. Henry Glassie, "Folk Art," in *Folklore and Folklife: An Introduction,* ed. Richard M. Dorson (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1973), p. 253, and "Structure and Function: Folklore and the Artifact," *Semiotica 7, no.* 4 (1973):339.
9. Kenneth L. Ames, *Beyond Necessity: Art in the Folk Tradition* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1977), p. 16.
10. Glassie, "Folk Art," pp. 257-58.
11. For a discussion of the American concept of wilderness, see Roderick Nash, *Wilderness and the American Mind* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1967), pp. 8-43. Specific analogies in Mormon thinking are detailed in George H. Williams, *Wilderness and Paradise in Christian Thought* (New York: Harper and Bros., 1962), pp. 117-20.
12. The rationale of the village is outlined in Lowry Nelson, *The Mormon Village* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1952); Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean May, *Building the City of God* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976); and Charles S. Peterson, "A Mormon Town: One Man's *West," Journal of Mormon History* 3 (1976):3-12.
13. Hugh W. Nibley, "Brigham Young on the Environment," in *To the Glory of God,* ed. Truman G. Madsen and Charles D. Tate,Jr. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), p. 8.

14. Nash, p. 25.
15. Quoted in Nash, p. 23.
16. See, Henry Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia* (Knoxville, Tenn.: University of Tennessee Press, 1975), pp. 122-36.
17. The most complete description of early Utah folk construction techniques is found in Pitman, pp. 17-109.
18. See HarleyJ. McKee, *Introduction to Early American Masonry,.* National Trust/Columbia University Series on Technology of Early American Building, no. 1 (Washington, D.C.: The National Trust for Historic Preservation, 1973), p. 86. The Mormon temple at Kirtland, Ohio, was covered with a similar "bricking" technique. See Laurel B. Andrew, *The Early temples of the Mormons* (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1978), pp. 38-39.
19. Pitman, p. 59.
20. Austin E. Fife, "Stone Houses of Northern Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 40, no. 1 (Winter 1972):19.
21. G. Y. Cannon, "Some Early Domestic Architecture in and around Salt Lake City, Utah," *American Architecture* 125 (May 1924) :473.
22. For architectural examples in Nauvoo, see Robert M. Lillibridge, "Architectural Currents on the Mississippi River Frontier, Nauvoo, Illinois," *Journal of the Society a/Architectural Historians* 19, no. 3 (October I960): 109.
23. These house types are described in Henry Glassie, *Pattern in the Material Folk Culture of the Eastern United States* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1968). Austin Fife's work with stone house types remains the best attempt to classify Utah folk architecture.
24. Peter L. Goss, "The Architectural History of Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (Summer 1975):208-39.
25. Quoted in Richard V. Francaviglia, "The Mormon Landscape: Existence, Creation, and Perception of a Unique Image in the American West," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oregon, 1970), p. 97.
26. See James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: The Archaeology of Early American Life* (Garden City, N.Y.: Anchor Books, 1977), pp. 98-117; Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia,* pp. 88-113.
27. Pitman, pp. 207-8.
28. Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia,* p. 158.
29. The work of one particular architect also served to introduce popular Eastern styles into Utah, see Paul L. Anderson, "William Harrison Folsom: Pioneer Architect," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 43, no. 3 (Summer 1975) :240-59.
30. Glassie, "Folk Art," p. 260; *Ames, Beyond Necessity,* p. 78.
31. See Goss, "Architectural History," pp. 215-16.

32. Glassie, "Structure and Function," pp. 238-331; also Milton B. Newton, Jr., and Linda Puliam-Di Napoli, "Log Houses as Public Occasions: A Historical Theory," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 67, no. 3 (September 1977) :3<50-66.
33. Glassie, "Folk Art," p. 259.
34. Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia,* pp. 19-40.
35. Pitman, pp. 191-97.
36. Glassie, "Folk Art," pp. 272-74.
37. The internal-external symmetry issue is discussed in Glassie, *Folk Housing in Middle Virginia,* p. 68; and by Gary Stanton, "German-American Log Buildings in Franklin and Dubois Counties, Indiana" (Paper read at the Hoosier Folklore Society Annual Meeting, Connor's Prairie, Indiana, 11 March, 1976).
38. The presence of the central-hall house has been vastly overestimated in Utah because of the general acceptance of Richard V. Francaviglia's early work, "Mormon Central-Hall Houses in the American West," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 61 (1979) :65-71. Cf. Pitman, p. 167.
39. Dolores Hayden, *Seven American Utopias* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press, 1976), p. 142.
40. Quoted in Francaviglia, "The Mormon Landscape," p. 96.
41. For an overview of material dealing with the definition of the Mormon landscape see Wayne L. Wahlquist, "A Review of Mormon Settlement Literature," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 45, no. 1 (Winter 1977):4-21.
42. Davis Bitton, "Early Mormon Lifestyles; or the Saints as Human Beings," in *The Restoration Movement: Essays in Mormon History,* ed. F. Mark McKiernan, Alma Blair, and Paul Edwards (Lawrence, Kans.: Coronado Press, 1973), pp. 273-306.

All uncredited photographs and drawings in Architecture section by Thomas R. Carter, 1978.

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